

Report on BPSI Summer Symposium – 28th June 2018
Business as Usual? – Collaborative Research at the University-Business Interface
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The BPSI Summer Symposium had as its theme *Collaborative Research at the University-Business Interface*, and brought together a cross-disciplinary group of local and national talent engaged in basic and applied research at this interface. The symposium had 70 registered attendees.

This symposium was organised with two objectives in mind: **[1]** highlight examples both internal and external to our University where effective business-university collaborations have developed as a means of encouraging York academics to forge new links in the future, and **[2]** ensure that BPSI researchers are aware how the University's Research and Business Development teams can assist in nucleating and priming collaborative research at the business-university interface. We asked each of our invited external and internal speakers to give a brief history of how their collaborative project arose, including any pointers that might assist other researchers looking to establish collaborative research links with industry or create a spin-out company. This included details like '*things we would do differently next time*', but also highlighted unexpected challenges, opportunities, and/or ways the hosting university could have better supported the innovation and collaboration processes.

The external speakers included both an academic involved in forming a spin-out company and researchers from SMEs: Dr. Carrie Ambler (Department of Biosciences, University of Durham and LightOx Ltd.), Dr. Paul Ko Ferrigno (CEO, metaLinear Ltd., Alderley Park), and Paul Gunning (Science Manager – Surface Analysis, Smith & Nephew, Hull). The internal speakers included Dr. Michael Plevin (PI, Biology) who collaborates with Oxford Nanopore, Dr. Michelle Rudden (Biology) a BBSRC-funded post-doc collaborating with Unilever, and Aritha Dornau (CNAP / Biology) who is a PhD student funded by a BBSRC iCASE studentship in collaboration with Wilson Bio-Chemicals. We also had brief presentations from Dr. Veronica Ongaro (Network Manager, LBNet, York) and Dr. Rachel Curwen (Research Development Associate – Life Sciences and Health) that highlighted funding opportunities specifically focused on nucleating and priming collaborative research at the business-university interface. The BPSI symposium also hosted a poster session, which included presenters from across the University of York. The symposium concluded with a discussion panel including all of the speakers and Dr. Malcolm Stokes, the new Head of Business Development at York. The discussions were prefaced by an introduction to five key recommendations from the Dowling Review (published in July 2015) on how the government can better support relationships between UK businesses and the UK's world-leading university researchers.

A few key points came out of this panel discussion: **1)** people are central to successful collaborations, and it is important to have the right people in the right jobs, **2)** spin-out timing should be carefully considered, **3)** open communication between academics and industry/business partners is essential, and the University should look to prioritise knowledge exchange over short-term income generation, **4)** the University should look at ways of simplifying the process of setting up industrially sponsored PhD studentships so academics can react quickly to new research opportunities at the business-university interface, and **5)** the University should look to find new ways of seeding collaborations at the business-university interface, particularly with SMEs.

Christoph Baumann